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AUTHOR Smutek, Malinda M.
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ABSTRACT

Instruction in English as a second language for differentially prepared college students should be conducted in an environment in which students have input from a wide range of authentic spoken and written language samples, varying in difficulty level. The instructional process should be viewed by the students as neither intimidating nor oppressive. A learning environment similar to that of immersion provides opportunities for language learning like those in first language acquisition, as contrasted with the general academic environment, which is culturally and linguistically alien. The order of instruction of language skills should also parallel the process of first language acquisition: listening first, then speaking, reading, and writing. Individualized, self-paced instruction is useful in addressing the needs of a large group of students with differential preparation, and it allows for flexible scheduling, progress at individual rates, and student control of the learning process. These elements in the learning environment will promote progress and confidence in learning English for academic success and social survival in an English-dominant society. A 10-page reference list is appended. (MSE)

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English as a Second Language: In Search of an Acquisition Rich Environment

A Comprehensive Paper Presented

by

Malinda M. Smutek

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The pedagogical search for a method to teaching students English or any other language foreign to their mother tongue is not a contemporary quest. "Historically, dissatisfaction in student learning outcomes had resulted in disenchantment by professionals with a variety of instructional methodologies" (Harper, 1985, p. 2). During the early part of the twentieth century, educators sought appropriate methods of language study. However, what methods they did implement were often impractical. "The goals of instruction were most frequently limited to the acquisition of relatively passive language skills - reading, grammatical recitation, and perhaps translation. Few students were encouraged to become totally conversant in a second language" (Mattran, 1976, p. 2).

The recognition of the poverty of the language study programs occurred at about the same time that Americanization programs were becoming prominent. Educators realized that serious errors had been made in the choice of lesson material. Too much emphasis, for example, had been placed on literary features of the English language and too little on the practical English the pupils needed for their survival in their neighborhoods, work places, or market areas (Darian, 1972).

> Children from homes in which non-English languages are spoken have always attended schools in the United States. Some of them, even those with little initial understanding of English, had succeeded in school programs designed for English speaking majority children. Others had failed. They had fallen behind or dropped out. They had left school without the English language skills or the basic educational preparation needed to achieve their full potential in English speaking mainstream society (Waggoner, 1984, p. 1).

Yet, little was done to modify language instruction. Teachers of English as a Second Language were not aware of the process of second language learning, nor were they cognizant of the structure and the phonology of the first language of their non-English speaking students. American educators' renewed interest in second language instruction in terms of oral and aural fluency came about almost as a direct consequence of the U.S.A.'s global involvement in World War II.

Suddenly, America's military and intelligence sectors required the services of personnel who could communicate fluently in languages not normally included in collegiate curricula as well as in languages which were commonly offered. However, government officials discovered "that few who had studied [any language] were comfortably able to communicate with native speakers of those languages and needed intensive oral instruction in order to do so" (Mattran, 1976, p. 4). Subsequently, they sought assistance from linguistic scientists in addressing their rather ambitious objective of having their personnel acquire complete command of the colloquial form of any language.

Approximately, forty years after World War II, American educators, confronted with new groups of immigrants and their children, have become aware that public education for all is not applied to the entire citizenry. A segment of residents, the uneducated and undereducated, have their academic needs substantially overlooked. "Many refugees require special training to become self-sufficient in the United States. They must not only acquire a new language but also learn skills basic to

living and working in an urban environment to using the technology and to understanding the cultural mores of the American work place " (Experiment in International Living, 1984, p. 2).

It is a false assumption that all immigrants successfully learn English. Immigrant communities are constantly being enlarged by newly arrived language minority speakers. This continuous influx of fellow immigrants impacts the established community members' shift from their native language to English. Furthermore, it impedes the ability of these community members' ability to learn the second language.

> History points out that not too many first generation adult immigrants even learn or learned the host language 'enough to get by'. Most [not all] immigrants settled into blocks or groups called enclaves and cultivated their culture and especially their language. Usually, the second generation didn't know English until they went to school. They became functionally bilingual. The first and, most of the time, the second generation socialized in their native language, (Fuhriman, 1983, p. 6), went to church in their native language, and most of their activities outside their employment were conducted in their native language (p. 7). It was not until the third generation that they became bilinguals and began to really socialize in English, go to church in English, and conduct other activities [and] outside employment in English. The fourth generation became more passively bilingual, that is, being dominantly English speakers but learning enough of the native language to be able to carry on polite conversations with grandma and grandpa, friends of the family, etc. Usually, by the fifth generation, they were basically monolingual English speakers (p. 8).

The need for English as a Second Language instruction does not diminish. One facet of the problem is that those instructional irrelevancies of ESL programs ascertained by educators involved in the Americanization programs of the twentieth century have persisted. "Lack of access to ESL

classes...inability of subject matter and regular English teachers to handle massive syntax problems, and a tendency to concentrate in technical fields resulted in lower English proficiency" (Fox, 1983, p. 3).

Still another aspect of the problem is the need of educators to select an approach to second language learning instruction which is most appropriate for their target student population. "Teachers are frequently urged to bridge the gap between camps of opposing theories or methodologies" (Danahy, 1984, p. 7). In order to select accordingly, one must understand that English as a Second Language itself is not a method nor an approach to education. It is a component of a total educational program. It is a course which has specific content with concepts and skills to be learned just like all other courses such as math, geology, or civics (Fuhriman, 1983, p. 5). Furthermore, educators need to recognize that an issue preliminary to that of instructional technique is one of curriculum (Harper, 1985, p. 3). Methodology can be determined only in relation to each aspect of the curriculum and the needs of the ESL student population in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Educators have implemented various teaching methods, some more appropriate than others, in encouraging the development of English language skills.

One of the earliest language teaching methods is known as the Grammar Translation Method. It prevailed in the United States until the end of the nineteenth century and was based on the principle that understanding a second language began with parallel

statements in the native language (Catford, 1964). The Grammar Translation Method assumes that study and memorization of grammar rules are considered the bases for progress. As each rule is mastered, the students learn vocabulary lesson by lesson (Darian, 1972). "The vocabulary is then used to translate difficult passages which tested [the students'] knowledge of the rules. There is little or no stress on pronunciation (p. 49) or composition; the chief purpose of this type of language teaching is developing an ability to translate" (p. 50). The main objective remains having a knowledge of grammar rules; the application of the rules is a secondary matter.

Croft (1972) states that a successful grammar performace by the student usually means his ability to recite the list of German prepositions which take the dative or to give the forms of the Latin verb to be in a particular order - sum, es, est - or to name the conjugation to which the Spanish verb cantar belongs or to decline the present tense of the English verb to do. As he explains:

> In a more sophisticated use, it may mean that the student is successful if he can puzzle out a fill-in-the-blanks exercise, oral or written, on the model——el perro—un animal. [The student] must extract from his soy, eres, es conjugation the form that is labeled third person singular and fit it into the blank. His performance is then judged by the speed and accuracy with which he can do these tasks (p. 42).

It seems inconsequential that students who devote years to studying a second language are in most cases unable to use it. Difficulty with the Grammar Translation Method occurs

because of the confusion of linguistic, literacy, and language aims. One can wonder then whether the Grammar Translation Method is the study of language or is it the study of linguistics (Croft, 1972, p. 42). If it is the former, it should enable the student to operate in some or most of the aspects of the society in which the language is used to conduct its cultural business. Croft (1972) believes that it is doubtful if the Germans spend much of their time discussing the preposition used with the dative case or if the speakers of Spanish as a first language ask each other to fill in the blanks in the sentence. Croft concludes that the Grammar Translation Method is a study of " low grade linguistics, that is, it gives some insights into how the language under study works, even though these insights are often phrased in terms more appropriate to the native language grammar than to the target language grammar" (p. 43).

One can also consider the role of the translation component found in the Grammar Translation Method. When the students of this method are not reciting rules or filling in the blanks in homework exercises, they are often translating their native language passages into English or putting English passages into their native language. If translation enables a student to function in the society which uses the language under study, such translation must become an instantaneous skill as may be the case for some students after long years of practice. However, since different languages use different structures to express similar concepts, translation as a means of learning a second language is questionable.

During the early twentieth century, the Direct Method was developed.

in Europe as a reaction against the Grammar Translation Method (Darian, 1972). This method emphasizes learning a second language by direct contact with it in meaningful situations. It assumes that the association of words and sentences with their meanings can be accomplished through demonstrations, dramatizations, and pictures. It asserts that language is primarily a spoken phenomenon which should be taught and learned by instruction which heavily concentrates on conversation and aural comprehension (Mattran, 1976). The ear and not the eye is the instrument for learning to speak a second language (Darian, 1972). An understanding of isolated words does not ensure the comprehension of spoken words nor the ability to use them (p. 55). It further assumes that an understanding of oral symbols is the basis for reading and writing and must precede them (p. 55). In other words, "it was axiomatic...that the native language of the students was never to be used in the classroom and that skill in the target language was most efficiently acquired through direct association with the language as it was spoken by natives" (p. 2).

The Direct Method proposes that all teaching should be done in the second language instead of in the native language of the students. However, not all educators favored this method. Sweet (1926) stated that the Direct Method presupposed the same process in first and second language learning.

> For the mature student, learning a second language [is a challenge] because the power of imitation has decreased, especially in pronunciation. [Yet,] the mind is formed, capable of generalization and abstraction, with infinitely greater knowledge of things and ideas. Incfeasing maturiaty brings greater powers of concentration amd methodological perserverance. Except for first language interference,

> these more than compensate for the disadvantages. Thus, the natural or direct method puts the adult in the position of an infant, without allowing him to use his own special abilities (Sweet, 1926, p. 75).

Darian (1972) believes that Sweet's statements are reflective of the Direct Method which stresses the spoken form of language and the use of the second language in class. However, they differ sharply from the Direct Method in regard to the emphasis of pronunciation and phonetics. Moreover, Darian contends that the Direct Method has strong grammatical limitations, practicing only principal sentences in the present tense and only first and third person verbs (p. 59).

Another well-known linguistic scholar, Otto Jespersen, had his own views about the Direct Method. He was convinced that there was a need for a contextual approach to language learning. Jespersen (1904) stated that "one can not say anything sensible with mere lists of words; indeed, not even disconnected sentences ought to be used...For there is generally as little connection between them as there would be in a newspaper if the same line were read all the way across from column to column" (p. 11). Jespersen also regarded grammatical structures as abstractions which are often difficult even for experts and therefore far beyond a group of students. He claimed that "one can not really begin to learn the grammar of a language until one knows the language itself" (p. 65). Accordingly, a student learns to produce a language pattern mechanically by drilling a pattern in isolation. The student, however, is unable to apply this pattern in different situations. To remedy this difficulty, Jespersen recommended pattern practice. He felt that conjugating

a verb alone in all its forms was sheer drudgery, but the exercise could become more interesting and beneficial when an entire sentence was used. For example, in the sentence - I gave Bill a dollar, Jespersen would substitute other words for a dollar, I, and gave.

In addition to advocating pattern practices, Jespersen favored other teaching techniques. He supported the practice of students learning to write compositions in the second language. By having teachers assign topics about events they discussed in class, teachers could recognize the students' structural problems, thereby preventing the students from "using a slender supply of fairly vague expressions [which] students often [used to] conceal their difficulties" (Darian, 1972, p. 63). Furthermore, Jespersen believed that there was a relationship between drawing and vocabulary. He suggested that the instructor place the names of several different items on the blackboard; have the students draw them in detail; and explain their pictures to the class (p. 62).

In response to the belief that second language acquisition can be accomplished by concentrating heavily on conversation and aural comprehension, the Audio-Lingual Method was evolved. It began in the 1940's in America and has as its basic premise that "language learning is primarily an oral activity and that reading is a secondary activity" (Jolly, 1974). Instruction in the written forms of the second language would be delayed until such time that the learner acquired reasonable mastery of the spoken form.

The Audio-Lingual Method, based on the assumption that the spoken language underlies writing, requires students to do a great deal of oral practice in the classroom. To supplement classroom instruction, teachers assign students to language labs. Wherever they are practicing, students are expected to have in mind the meaning of what they are repeating. Their accuracy is considered a standard for mastery. In turn, mastery is based on the students' realistic imitation of the second language as used by native speakers. In order to provide exposure to native speakers, school systems incorporate the use of language laboratories as part of their curriculum. By means of tapes and records, teacers are able to expose their students to various dialects of American English, Spanish, French, etc. The lab facility allows the instructor to monitor the aural and oral competencies of each student as the student sits in a compartmentalized cubicle with headphones on his or her head. However, there is little student involvement and a great deal of teacher direction which, according to Rivers (1981), does not promote successful second language learning. "If anything has been learned by decades of research in the field of learning psychology, it is that the mind is much more than a tabla rasa upon which knowledge is systematically imprinted by the teacher. It is quite generally agreed that the optimum learning is seldom possible without positive emotional involvement on the part of the students...The student's attitude is not likely to remain positive if [the student is] never allowed to express [his or her] individuality" (Grittner, 1977, p. 151)

The Audio-Lingual Method does not promote individuality nor

interactive learning experiences. Students are required to form new language habits instead of selecting and adapting previously acquired habits with their own language. Drills aid the student in gaining conscious control of the second language. Then, by means of pattern practices, the student can progressively gain language mastery as recognition and production of the language items are made unconscious habits. By means of recognition, imitation, repetition, variation, and selection, the student acquires the skill of speaking the second language fluently. However, Rivers (1981) feels that phrases such as drills carry overtones of an authoritarian approach to language instruction (p. 101) that is a contradiction of the concept that language must be creatively taught (p.195) and foster natural, spontaneous communication (Danahy, 1984, p. 21).

Nowadays, such a tightly teacher controlled learning environment for language instruction is not advocated. "As it is increasingly more clear that language acquisition occurs in the context of genuine communication rather than the drilling of forms, it is essential that opportunities for such communication exist in the language classroom rather than the traditional Initiation-Reply-Feedback pattern that still dominates most classroom interaction" (Kreeft, 1984, p. 279). This decline in popularity of the Audio-Lingual Method, its language labs, and discrete point machine scored tests has affected changes in opinions regarding second language instructional methods. The major focus of ESL teachers and researchers is now on the functional and communicative competencies of second language learners rather

than on their grammatical competence (Kreeft, 1984, p. 285). Educators such as King (1985) and Hasan (1981) believe that the environment, namely the total learning situation, influences the students' progress in second language learning. Given that a functional view of language means focusing on how people use language to communicate, to negotiate, and to interact, Jaggar and Smith-Burke (1985) believe that educators should foster an atmosphere that will permit language learning to happen naturally.

> Research confirms that [students] are active agents in their own learning. Knowledge is not something that exists outside; it is constructed within by the learner. All learning, particularly the learning of language, involves activity and discovery. [Students] will acquire new knowledge only when they can relate it to existing ideas or language, that is when it 'makes sense' in terms of what they already know (Jaggar, 1985, p. 2). It is now clear that language development involves much more than learning the forms of the language (p. 3).

Furthermore, recent studies focusing on language acquisition emphasize the ability of the learner to acquire the second language in as natural a way possible by being exposed to it (Fortin, 1983, p. 18). The most authoritative research suggests in fact that the most effective means for teaching a second language lies simply in setting up an "acquisition rich" environment, thereby overloading the students with input from a wide range of authentic English language samples both printed and spoken which vary in levels of difficulty (Krashen, 1981). The Immersion Method promotes an environment in which the emphasis is on language as a means of communicating ideas. It does not stress rote memorization of words and

sentence structures. "As the teacher goes about his daily routine, he speaks to and with students in a natural way. During the early phases of instruction, gestures and mime are used extensively to assist comprehension. Little by little, this mode of communication is replaced by verbal interaction. The student then begins to acquire this new language as naturally as he did his mother tongue" (Fortin, 1983, p. 16), although the interval between the time a student hears a new word or structure spoken by the teacher and the time he is able to say it correctly and spontaneously is relatively long (p. 21).

Jana Staton's (1982) studies reveal that children and adults acquire language somewhat naturally when placed in immersion situations where they have opportunities to interact frequently and meaningfully with native speakers. Moreover, the degree of proficiency in the second language is influenced by the number of hours students are in contact with the second language (Fortin, 1983, p. 12). "It is generally found...that after eight years of instruction in the target language [i.e. second language], the early total immersion students are as proficient or nearly as proficient as native speakers in listening and reading the target language but are not quite native-like in speaking and writing" (Swain, 1981, p. 84). Educators have observed that students taught in early total immersion classes speak the second language with more spontaneity than those students in late total immersion classes (Fortin, 1983, p. 14). Furthermore, students in total immersion classes do acquire a greater level of competency in the target language than those

enrolled in partial immersion classes. Cummins (1979) offers an explanation for this phenomenon. In early partial immersion classes, students may not master the target language because of inadequate instructional time. This lack of mastery, in turn, may prevent students from grasping more complex concepts. In other words, proficiency in the second language appears to be a crucial factor in students' academic achievement in that target language.

Roy (1980) submits that the concept of teaching a second language using the Immersion Method is not new. He states that this method was well summarized some decades ago by Otto Jespersen (1904): "The first condition for good instruction in second languages would seem to be to give the pupil as much as possible to do with and in the second language; he must be steeped in it, not only get a sprinkling of it now and then; he must be ducked down in it and get to feel as if he were in his own element, so that he may at last disport himself in it as an able swimmer" (p. 404).

In immersion classes, the second language is used as a tool for conceptualization as well as a tool for communicating ideas. In early immersion classes, students acquire linguistic competency in the second language as they develop cognitive skills. "Because teachers in early immersion classes rarely translate into the child's mother tongue, the child acquires two distinct labels for one concept" (Fortin, 1983, p. 21); for example, notebook can be <u>libreta</u>. In late immersion classes, students' cognitive skills have been developed in their native

language; consequently, their linguistic competency in the target language trails behind.

> Developing and enriching the students' oral expression is extremely important in immersion classes, and it should precede the development of the written communication skills. The students should have many opportunities to listen to the target language as spoken by the teacher before they are expected to comprehend. They should be provided with many opportunities to listen and to understand before speaking. They should also have many opportunities to speak before reading and writing...The formal study of grammar begins only after the student has had sufficient experience in listening, comprehending, and speaking the language (Fortin, 1983, p. 22)...Once the students have acquired basic oral [and aural competencies], they will be better equipped to learn its written form (p. 28).

Acquiring speaking and listening skills is not enough for second language students to succeed in school. Reading and writing are also important. The importance of these four skills is recognized by the 1978 Amendments to the Bilingual Education Act. The Amendments changed the definition of the population to be served by educational programs receiving financial assistance under the Act from children with limited English speaking ability (LESA) to children with limited English proficiency (LEP), including proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding English. They defined the domain in which the skills must function as classrooms where the language of instruction is English (Waggoner, 1984, p. 7).

Reading should be based largely on oral expression (Fortin, 1983) in the Immersion Method. A language experience approach in learning to read is strongly recommended for students who must grasp the meaning of the written symbol. According

to Fortin, this approach basically uses the ESL students' conversations about their own experiences with topics familiar to them in order to develop reading materials. "As students acquire and enrich their reading vocabulary, they are able to develop decoding skills and word recognition skills which help them to read less familiar material. Teachers should choose reading materials or texts with this idea in mind" (p. 29). It should be noted that students who have been reading in their native language throughout primary grades will continue to use the appropriate reading skills in learning a second language. It is important that much oral expression precede and accompany all reading and writing activities. "Teachers who place more emphasis on the written aspect may do so at the detriment of the oral language" (p. 42).

In regard to writing, the formal study of the written language of the second language should begin only after students have had sufficient experience in listening, speaking, and reading (Fortin, 1983, p. 34). In the past decade, changes have begun to be made in the way composition is taught to ESL students. Previously, emphasis was placed on organized grammatically correct essays. Traditionally, grammar rules were mainly taught through rote memorization and the completion of repeated exercises and assignments. It is questionable whether these rules were mastered through these activities. The understanding of grammar rules through the study of meaningful passages rather than through repetitious work allows the student to correct oral and written languages (Hafernik, 1983, p. 2). In other words,

teaching a student the rudiments of the written grammar before he or she has shown mastery of the oral grammar will not facilitate learning the language. "Current research in modern linguistics suggests that a given language may have an oral grammar that differs considerably from its written grammar" (Fortin, 1983, p. 34).

Since the focus of writing is no longer on the grammatically or organized aspects of compositions, the process of writing itself is emphasized by proponents of the Immersion Method. Models of the writing process point out the importance of revision as an integral part of this process (Murray, 1980; Perl, 1980; Flowers and Hayes, 1981). One way to help students focus on revision and writing as a process is through peer editing. Peer editing, sometimes labeled peer critique or peer review, is defined as students' reading and commenting on their classmates' papers (Hafernik, 1983, p. 2). Although it does not guarantee that students will be transformed into good writers, peer editing does have several advantages (Danahy, 1984, p. 17). "It alters the students' perception of the writing process and of their own writing; it increases students' self-confidence and fosters personal growth; it unifies the class; and it serves as a teaching and diagnostic tool for instructors" (Hafernik, 1983, p. 3).

The premise of peer editing is that students in groups of three, for example, can learn from and help each other. Educators are encouraged to select the group members based on their different strengths and weaknesses. Peer editors do not and can not diagnose all grammatical errors in their classmates'

compositions. "Students should be encouraged to view the paper as a unit that communicates their ideas. After students discover what they want to say, they should work closely at their sentences, word choice, etc. Instructors can read students' drafts and points out the major grammatical problems to be corrected in the next draft" (Hafernik, 1983, p. 8).

One concern of the peer editing technique is whether students will be honest in the assessment of their group member's composition work. Hafernik (1983) believes that the concept of supprt groups is a familiar one to most cultures and that most ESL students are interested in helping their peers. After becoming more accustomed to editing, peer editors' comments concerning their classmates' written work are more specific and helpful. Instructors should make it clearly known that the role of the editor is to comment on the essay and suggest possible improvements and not to write the assignments for his classmate.

In summary, students learn from editing their classmates' compositions and having their papers edited. Hafernik (1983) notes that students who become good editors generally become good writers since they may begin to look at their own written work more carefully. Hafernik also acknowledges the fact that improving writing skills is a slow process, and so the results of peer editing may not be evident in the first weeks and may seem minimal later. If writing instructors "can help students understand how to write, understand the process, and [understand] the place of revision in that process, and can help students be less dependent...then perhaps the students will continue to improve their writing and cognitive skills after they leave [ESL]

classes" (p. 11). In short, students in immersion classes learn the second language both formally and informally. The second language, English, is taught as a subject as well as used to teach other subjects and to communicate in impromptu situations (Fortin, 1983, p. 19).

Language, according to Martha King (1985), is part and parcel of all one knows and is. "A frontal attack on one's speech touches the imminent self" (p. 27). ESL students face this challenge when making the transition from their home environment to a school environment where they are expected to assimilate into the school's curriculum which gives very little attention to or appreciation of what the ESL students already know and can do (p. 27). "A serious problem in extending language and literacy in schools arises from the fact that so much of the content of learning has been decontextualized. That is, reading, writing, and various other skill and content areas have been removed from the real world of experience and practice exercises put in their places. Children find that they are expected to deal with abstractions of knowledge before they have had an opportunity to understand the real thing" (p. 35). Consequently, adjustment to individual levels of language proficiency is very difficult, especially in a learning environment in which one teacher instructs a classroom of students who may vary greatly in language ability. Much too often, a teacher elects to use a middle of the road approach which neither challenges the more advanced nor reaches the less skilled students.

Recent studies (Kreeft, 1984) demonstrate the need for more

individualized teacher-student interaction. Educators in the U.S.A. are facing the challenges of (1) how to individualize instruction in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms in which students may have limited English proficiency and (2) how to engage ESL students in meaningful interaction in order to develop their ability to communicate in oral and written English. Furthermore, current research in the processes of second language acquisition suggests that the best environment for the acquisition of a second language is one which there are opportunities for ESL students for meaningful, contextually rich communication in English much like the context in which they acquired their first language.

However, classroom researchers have found little evidence of authentic communication, namely meaningful interaction in the ESL classroom (Kreeft, 1984, p. 2). Apparently, the emphasis has been placed on language pattern drills and on the testing of students' facility with language forms at the expense of the development of more complex areas of self-expression. According to Raimes (1983), language teaching continues to foster learning rather than acquisition, drills rather than discourse, and accuracy rather than fluency (p. 545). Moreover,, relatively little direct instruction in listening comprehension is provided (Fox, 1983, p. 5).

The importance of teaching strategies for reading in ESL and the extent to which they contribute to successful comprehension is also being debated. Researchers found that "readers with higher ESL competence and higher exposure to reading seem

to display better reading performance in ESL than readers with lower competence who received formal training in reading strategies" (Laufer and Sim, 1981, p. 10). A reading strategy can be viewed as a technique which is composed of two categories of operations: main line reading and word solving strategies (Hosenfeld, 1977, p. 11).

> The better students appeared to be main line readers who employed contextual guessing in deciphering the meaning of unknown words. At the same time, the weaker students got bogged down with word-solving strategies, an excessive use of dictionaries, and translating. Most of the students hesitated to skim and were unable to ignore or disregard unknown terms. For the very weak students who must first learn how to verbalize their decoding method and reading expectation and then how to acquire and apply the basic reading strategies in which they are deficient, more individualized instruction is suggested (Roizen, 1984, p. 2).

> The fact that the better students read the entire text before answering the questions indicates that these main line readers are able to retain the information as well as comprehend it. The ability to answer some questions without necessarily having read the [entire] article allows one to presume that their background knowledge is due to extensive reading in [their] first language. This should not be underestimated, as it exercises the mind in developing strategies in any language (p. 13).

Some information concerning ESL students' reading strategies has been gathered by means of studies of test taking. It has been found that ESL students reading English are at times more successful than are native English speakers at answering questions correctly because ESL readers treat all material as being equally important and do not overlook details (Cohen, 1983). Other research reveals that students perform similarly when answering open ended or multiple choice items, although the open ended items proved to be the better testers

of reading comprehension (Roizen, 1984, p. 2). Widdowson (1978) classifies open ended questions as those which require an overt response. He believes that since there is no dialogue or socialization involved when an ESL student is taking a written test, such questions may be regarded as an unnatural imposition on the student reader. Widdowson also considers multiple choice questions as bothersome. "The learner is presented with a set of sentences and his first task is to comprehend them. If they are to reflect genuine possibilities of choice, then the difference between them is likely to be slight, and discrimination between them is likely to make considerable demands on the learner's comprehending skills. [However,] this exercise in discrimination is not related to an understanding of the passage but is imposed on the learner as a separate comprehending task" (p. 98).

Unless oral examinations replace them, these traditional types of tests will continue to be used to examine the ESL students' reading comprehension. Besides the faults emphasized by Widdowson, educators should realize that when ESL teachers write multiple choice questions, they often choose distractions on the basis of their intuition. However, their intuition about what will distract the students away from the appropriate response are not always accurate (Cohen, 1980, p. 20). "The obvious advantage of open ended questions is that students are not required to read and interpret alternative choices" (p. 19).

Most information about ESL students' reading strategies has been collected by means of the oral interview (Cohen et. al., 1979; Cohen and Aphek, 1981; Connor, 1982; Dollerup et. al.,

1981; Fullmore, 1981; Hamburg and Spaan, 1981; Hosenfeld, 1977, 1979; Larsen, 1981; and Laufer and Sim, 1981). It should be noted that some researchers have used written questionnaires in the students' native language (Roizen, 1983). Most interviewers employ introspective interviewing, namely questioning the students while they are reading or being tested and retrospective interviewing which deals with questioning the students once they have finished a reading or testing assignment (Hosenfeld, 1977, p. 112).

Oral interviewing has provided valuable data. However, to some researchers like Larsen (1981), this technique has several disadvantages. One drawback is that a researcher has to determine if the ESL students, who are the interviewees, are able to identify and articulate their test taking strategies and problems. A second disadvantage is that its success or failure may be influenced by the personality of the interviewer (Fillmore, 1981, p. 257). Interviewers can avoid these problems by asking the ESL students to think aloud during several practice sessions until a routine is established. In regard to retrospective interviews, some researchers have doubts concerning their reliability as they are many times incomplete (Hosenfeld, 1979, p. 68).

In summary, reading in a second language increases one's ability to visualize a second language, especially when the characters of the alphabet of a second or even a third language are not the same of those of the first language. Visualizing an alphabet which differs from the one acquired during one's childhood is a challenge. ESL students' abilities to read a text rapidly and scan line by line or paragraph by paragraph instead of decipher-

ing it letter by letter or word by word are essential strategies that ESL students only can acquire by being increasingly exposed to English. Those students who fail have neither the self-confidence nor the capacity to use contextual guessing when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. They tend to use the dictionary exclusively as a translation instrument. "There is a remarkable correlation between the failures, the general low level of English language proficiency of the ESL students, and the overuse of dictionaries" (Roizen, 1984, p. 13).

In addition to speaking, listening, and reading English, ESL students need to write. Current research has demonstrated that difficulty in writing English in such activities as essays, term papers, lab reports, and essay tests is considered the second most frequently mentioned language problem for ESL students in school and in the work place. Other prevalent language related problems for ESL students are reading speed and comprehension. Some researchers have proposed that underlying curricular assumptions that the classroom alone offers ample opportunities for ESL students to practice receptive English, conversation, and written and oral expression are apparently incorrect (Fox, 1983, p. 5).

As speaking and reading skills are different from each other, so are speaking and writing distinct communication skills. "Traditionally, educators have focused on speaking skills first and reserved writing until later, with the result that in classrooms where English is learned as a second language, writing is often postponed until a considerable degree of oral proficiency

has been attained" (Kreeft, 1984, p. 394). Moreover, writing activities in many ESL classes more often consist of fill-in-the-blank exercises which stress basic skills—spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar. They do not emphasize sufficiently the written expression of an idea and the thinking, reasoning, and organizational skills necessary to adequately convey the idea (Applebee, 1981).

One instructional technique that enables the ESL teacher to individualize his or her instruction in order to meet the educational needs and language proficiency levels of all ESL students in a class is Dialogue Journal Writing. This activity provides the ESL students an opportunity to engage in meaningful written interaction with a competent speaker of English (Kreeft, 1984). The "dialogue journals are bound notebooks in which students write regularly to a teacher about one or more topics of their own choosing, and the teacher writes back daily to each student not to evaluate the student's writing but as an active participant in a written 'conversation' that continues throughout the entire school term" (p. 3).

According to Staton, et. al (1982), the interaction aspect of Dialogue Journal Writing has advantages. The first advantage is that the writing is student generated. The ESL students are permitted to write about topics of their choice at their level of English language proficiency. Their teacher responds to each student's journal individually, adapting to each student's level of English language proficiency. Another advantage is that this

writing is interactive. It happens on a regular schedule with student and teacher being free to initiate topics of personal and mutual interest. The objective is that either one or the other will acknowledge the topic; respond to it; and seek as well as provide information about the topic. A third advantage is that the writing is functional since teacher and student are focusing on the process of communication and not on the process of form. The teacher does not evaluate or comment on the student's English. Instead, her writing serves as a consistent language model for the ESL student within the context of the message being communicated in the journal. A fourth advantage is that the context for the teacher-student interaction is non-threatening. Unlike oral conversation, ESL students have the time to think about their thoughts and how to express them before they write them in the journal. Also, the positive feedback that the ESL students receive from their teacher's written comments may encourage them to continue to use English.

> Thus, the dialogue journal interaction provides the context which seems to be optimal for the acquisition of a second language, in both its oral and written forms. At the same time, the interaction carries with it a number of advantages to the teacher. The teacher has the satisfaction of of seeing the growth that occurs over time in students' ability to express themselves in writing in the target language and of knowing that he or she actively participated in that process on a daily basis.
>
> The dialogue journal writing also provides the teacher with data to assess students' language development in real life interactions, rather than in a testing situation. Tests and assigned compositions provide information about students' more formal language productions and can be important for assessing to what extent students have learned particular language rules, but they do not always adequately reflect students' competence

in non-test situations (Kreeft, 1984, p. 7).

Furthermore, current research indicates that Dialogue Journal Writing may be applied to many educational situations involving ESL students from primary grades through adult education. Since this technique does not need new technology or equipment, extensive retraining of teachers is not required. The teachers serve as facilitators of the interaction and as models for ESL students' thinking and expression. This technique evolved as a result of the desire of Leslee Reed, a teacher in the Los Angeles Public School System, to communicate with her students. Reed (1983) finds the Dialogue Journal Writing technique an initial information source about the students' abilities.

The key to effective Dialogue Journal Writing is the connection between teacher and student responses. It has been suggested that by using certain strategies, the teacher promotes both the number and the complexity of student responses. Murray (1980) proposes that there are several strategies teachers can use with students to generate their responses in their journals: ask information and opinion questions; elaborate and add information; change the topic; and draw generalizations from statements made by the student. He also contends that a method for evaluating the effectiveness of each strategy is to analyze (1) the frequency of student responses; (2) the elaborative details provided in the responses; and (3) the syntactic complexity and cohesiveness of their responses.

"Generally...writing develops in two directions: (1) toward communicative or transactional functions where writing is objective and concerned with reality and (2) in the opposite

direction, where writing is more subjective and less concerned with directly influencing ongoing events. The writer's goal is to recapture, to savor, to reformulate events, and to shape them into a verbal construct" (King, 1985, p. 33). Staton (1982) analyzes features of the language input that the students receive from the teacher in the journals. She makes clear that the dialogue journal interaction, when it is functional, about student generated topics, and continued over a sufficient time period, creates the necessary conditions for the development of written language competence in much the same way that oral interaction provides the conditions for the acquisition of spoken competence. In other words, "Dialogue Journal Writing may prove to be a particularly important practice in the development of beginning literacy skills, as reading and writing skills can develop naturally along with speaking and listening from the very beginning of the learning process" (Kreeft, 1984, p. 395).

One of the most interesting discoveries in recent language acquisition research is that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order (Krosher, 1982, p. 12). These findings suggest to some educators that all language learners regardless of their native language organize and process a second language in a similar manner so that the second language learning process can be said to be universal. Furthermore, "the learner's previous language (p. 391) background and the imitation and rote learning of particular lexical items or particular forms by individual learners moderate these similarities and produce differences among learners" (Kreeft, 1984, p. 392).

The need to address the disparity of English language proficiency of ESL students has influenced many ESL teachers to explore the prospect of individualized instruction. Computer Assisted Language Learning, for example, represents possibilities for a new path in the field of second language instruction. Developers of computer assisted English as a Second Language materials are trying to identify and combine the elements of instruction which are best suited for their medium. At present, computers have at least four possible functions: (1) task master, (2) tool (as in word processing), (3) tutor (instructional test), and (4) tutee (in which the student programs the computer (Dalgish, 1980, p. 20).

Traditionally, when people discussed ESL, they were talking about the teaching of English grammar. Similarly, when educators spoke of computer assisted instruction in ESL, they were talking about grammar lessons. Computer Assisted Instruction started in the 1960's at a time when theories of structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology were being replaced by those of Transformational Grammar and Cognitive Psychology. These changes affected ESL instruction. Computer Assisted Instruction grammar lessons were useful to give ESL students out-of-class practice with the more mechanical aspects of English so that in-class time could be used for more learning activities. Teacher programmers designed lessons which focused on language forms in an attempt to reinforce positive language behavior and remediate incorrect usage (Jamieson, 1984, p. 3).

These computer programmed grammar lessons stressed verb tense, use of articles or prepositions, or question and clause formation. Paulston and Bruder (1976) classified these lessons

as mechanical exercises with very little substantive and communicative value. For example, a student would be presented a sentence in which some part of speech would be omitted such as a verb. Given the sample form of an appropriate verb, the student must change it to the correct form and type it in the blank. In this type of drill, the computer would judge the student's input. If the input, namely the student's answer, is not acceptable, the student receives a message from the computer and is told to try again. If the response is accurate, the next drill item is shown.

Variations of this basic drill as classified by Paulston and Bruder (1976) have been developed. These are lessons in which the ESL student's responses are examined periodically while the student is working through the lesson so that the computer can determine whether the student can continue in the lesson; be given more remediation; or be moved ahead because he or she appears to know the material. This format is called tutorial, mainly because ESL students with varied ability can proceed in ways appropriate to their competency within the same lesson program (Jamieson, 1984). "Its presentation is branched as opposed to the linear format of a drill and practice" (p. 4).

These types of lessons are not favored by all educators. Advocates of a totally communicative approach to language teaching regard the computer as a helpful tool for second language instruction only in so far as it can be used to offer ESL students opportunities to practice communicative aspects of English. Other researchers consider these grammar lessons as inadequate in regard to judging student responses. The computer

program lessons do not analyze the ESL student's response in a manner that is sufficient for the computer to submit to the student relevant feedback messages when errors are made (Hart, 1981). For instance, an ESL student could make a spelling or morphological mistake. Yet, the computer would evaluate his answer as if the student had typed utter nonsense. In response to these problems, proponents of Computer Assisted Instruction in terms of language learning have worked toward developing programs they consider intelligent in that these programs will be able to identify ESL students' misconceptions that may lead to their production of wrong answers instead of just recording their answers as right or wrong (Chapelle and Jamieson, 1983, and Loritz, 1984).

Their efforts to produce intelligent programming is considered the integrative or communicative approach (Jamieson, 1984). This approach stresses the function of language and not its structure. The Communicative Approach employs diverse activities such as games, simulation lessons, and dramatic lessons (p. 5). Students can participate individually or with their classmates in games such as hangman, tic-tac-toe, etc. Their performance is assessed in terms of speed and accuracy. On the other hand, students are invited to interact with the computer using written conversation. "The computer acts as an expert and the student tries to solve a problem by interacting with the computer (Higgins and Johns, 1984) in these simulation lessons. Some educators, in an attempt to make the simulation lessons more lifelike, have added videotape and videodisc equipment to the computer unit (Schneider and Bennion, 1983). In regard to drama-

tic lessons, ESL students are able to give the computer instructions instead of being told what to do. This dynamic interaction (Canale and Barker, 1984) of student with computer gives the student practice in using language in order to be the agent and not the recipient of a request.

Computer Assisted Instruction is a means of providing individualized instruction to ESL students. Current research shows that certain grammatical error types are more likely to occur with some linguistic groups of ESL students because of first language interference. As a result, the need for individualized learning is necessary to assist the students. The value of this approach is that it provides "correction without [negative] criticism; immediate feedback, sometimes in the form of graphics and animation; student autonomy; control; and interaction" (Dalgish, 1984, p. 4). It also allows for a linguistically heterogeneous ESL class since the instructional material can be focused with each student's native language in mind. Proponents feel that computers would help linguistically similar ESL students not become dependent on their mother tongue. Professor Nancy Duke Lay (City College, New York, 1984) states that educators consider Computer Assisted Instruction applicable to ESL, although many instructors are not comfortable with utilizing computers in the ESL class until they are trained themselves. Helping ESL students become literate in English by means of computers is a worthy objective according to Professor Lay, but she advises that "precaution is eminently-wise given the Computer Assisted Instruction movement [is a] bandwagon that is careening along with little or no direction"

(Dalgish, 1984, p. 3).

Learning to develop listening skills in English is made possible by computer use. "Perhaps because ESL teachers are accustomed to sending students to a language lab for practice with their oral and aural skills, it is easy to envision the computer used in a similar way. Beyond traditional language lab use, teachers are imagining numerous, exciting, individual listening activities for students using the computer" (Jamieson, 1984, p. 9). Even though there are not many ESL students currently using the computer in order to develop listening skills, listening lessons have been produced for main frame, mini, and micro computers. ESL students have access to spoken English by means of headphones attached to the computer equipment. Prerecorded lessons are stored on a cassette tape or disc. ESL students are able to listen repeatedly to these prerecorded lessons by touching the computer monitor screen or by pressing a key of the computer key board.

There are various activities which can accompany these prerecorded lessons. In some cases, an ESL student can hear directions, whereas in others, he not only reads the directions on the computer screen but also hears them. There are also dictation-type lessons available which require that the ESL student hears a statement and then types it using the computer's keyboard. Another lesson format consists of a passage which a student listens to and then has to answer multiple choice questions. The student is required to read the questions before and while listening to the passage before he answers the questions, a variation of this last format is requiring the ESL student to hear seg-

ments of the passage and then respond to the true-false questions about what he heard (Jamieson, 1984, p. 10).

ESL students may also develop reading and writing skills in English by using a computer. Reading is a language skill that can be presented in an individualized format by means of computer assisted instructional materials. Individualization is critical since students read at different levels; have difficult English vocabulary comprehension; and read at various speeds. Moreover, educators understand that their students are challenged by writing in English. Writing grammatically correct seems to be insurmontable for many ESL students. Once again, individualized instruction affords students opportunities to work and strengthen their individual skill deficiencies. One kind of computer assisted writing lesson for students asks questions and then incorporates the student's answers in the context of a story (Woodruff et. al., 1981). Another type asks a student questions about the topic in order to get the student thinking about what to write (Burns, 1980). Some computer lessons provide students with writing skills by having them learn how to identify the focus of a paragraph or an essay; to organize sentences; choose appropriate transitional words and phrases; and to develop their thoughts——introduction, discussion, and conclusion (Jamieson, 1984). Reid et. al. (1983) reported that ESL students can be taught to use the computer system and they like it. Moreover, he felt that computers encouraged ESL students to edit and revise their written work.

> As for the actual writing and revision process, computers are being used for text processing.

> Students use the computer to type letters and compositions. They edit these on line and then print them out on paper. One example of a system that goes beyond simple text processing is Writer's Workbench that was developed by Bell Labs and is being used in a pilot project with ESL students at Colorado State University. With this program, a student types in a composition and the computer checks it for misspellings, counts the number of words in each sentence, and tells the student what percentage of sentences are simple, compund, and complex (Jamieson, 1984, p. 13).

Computer Assisted Instruction can also be used to address first language interference. For some ESL students, the organization of a paragraph and an essay in American English classes contrasts with what they have been taught in their homelands. The task then for educators is to develop ESL software that would permit students to observe that it is not their ideas but rather their methods of organizing their ideas that conflict with American English writing models. It should be noted that ESL "students have less difficulty absorbing the American English rhetorical style than they do in absorbing American English grammar, vocabulary, and idiom. [As a result,] the potential for graphics and animation in ESL grammatical instruction is important as well. Certain troublesome grammtical concepts are extremely hard to grasp for ESL students and may only be partially understood by ESL teachers themselves. An appropriate example is the full range of deceptively simple English articles. For example, I see a dog versus I see the dog; close a window versus close the window; The United States versus America" (Dalgush, 1984, p. 6).

Computer Assisted Instruction can also aid teachers in their explanation of complex, semantically based grammatical concepts. "A non-language, visual image of the grammatical concept

provided by the computer can create the correct impression and can be more easily recalled and applied than technical terminology" (Dalgish, 1984, p. 7). Moreover, by utilizing the computer in their classrooms, ESL teachers can provide their students with opportunities to develop their literacy, precision, and awareness of the logic of English grammar and syntax. These opportunities made possible by good computer software "...can help students see the pattern of their errors, understand why the errors were made, and learn a skill—the manipulation of a computer" (p. 8).

Although proponents believe Computer Assisted Instruction affords ESL students opportunities to practice English, others are not so sure.

> One of the problems with communicative ESL lessons today is their lack of availability. Lessons of this type are very expensive to produce in terms of time and, in the case of the videodiscs, hardware. However, by far the most serious problem is the quality of the interaction that goes on between computer and student as the student works with a communicative lesson. For example, in a program in which the ESL student is expected to ask the computer questions, it is apparently assumed that the student already knows how to form grammatical questions because if a question is not in the correct grammatical form, the computer will respond with 'I don't understand' and then wait for the student to pose the question grammatically. This level of interaction falls short of real communication, especially when the way ESL students communicate is taken into account (Jamieson, 1984, p. 7).

Herbert Selinger (Queens College, New York, 1984) believes that computer software is re-inventing language lab materials which were based on stimulus-response (S-R) strategies that often bored students. Apparently, program designers versed in the area of programmed instruction which is based essentially on Stimulus-Response behavior have applied this approach to com-

puters. Although people familiar with computers feel that computers will be restricted to Stimulus-Response interaction, Dalgish (1984) states that ESL teachers are not supportive of S-R materials, and therefore, do not regard ESL software based on S-R techniques very highly.

Speaking and listening skills in English are not addressed adequately by Computer Assisted Instruction. Some ESL teachers have reservations about using the computer since the computer has difficulty in recognizing sentence and word boundaries in spoken English. " Even at a phonemic level, the computer has a great deal of difficulty teasing out all of the variation that occurs when different native speakers use phonemes in various word positions. With the current state of technology in this area as it is, it is difficult to identify the prospects for computerized lessons that allow the student to practice speaking skills" (Jamieson, 1984, p. 12). Listening also is not adequately addressed by Computer Assisted Instruction. A major reason is that providing listening lessons requires ESL teachers to use extra equipment that requires more space, money, and maintenance. Furthermore, a computer's size may make the capturing of sound segments very difficult (Jamieson, 1984). This poor sound quality, in turn, makes understanding English very frustrating for the ESL students.

Other skill areas that Computer Assisted Instruction does not address well are those of reading and writing. Computers "don't process the answers to open ended questions intelligently. Many reading lessons present much text on the screen, making it

hard on the student's eyes to work at a terminal for a long period of time. The presentation of a great deal of text also decreases the amount of interaction the student has with the computer. Lessons, in which this is the case, called 'page turners' have been denounced for years by leaders in instructional computing" (Bork, 1981, p. 11). Since computer programs are unable to understand free expression, the use of computers to aid ESL students with developing writing skills is limited. There are programs that are capable of instructing ESL students in regard to sentence writing, revision, and organizational skills. Yet, programs are still deficient in terms of evaluating an ESL student's style, appropriateness of language usage, transition, and content development (Lawlor, 1982).

There are other short comings in Computer Assisted Instruction. Some educators (Bork, 1981 and Baum, 1983) consider the fact that most ESL courseware of Computer Assisted Instruction programs are based on drill and practice exercies in which the computer screen is supposed to be equal to pages of a textbook. It is even worse when the exercise format appears to resemble ditto sheets. Consequently, since the lesson material is bookish in format, ESL students tend to lose interest as the novelty waars off (Dalgish, 1984). Another shortcoming of ESL software is the lock step quality of the lessons. Students are not able to more forward or backward within a lesson nor are they able to skip ahead to another lesson since the student can not go until he or she answers correctly (Dalgish, 1984). Also, students are not shown that their errors form any type of pattern. "One error after another is

flashed on the screen, taken in numerical order from student mistakes. This lock stepping problem is related to the program's lack of branching capability. Since there is no distinction between a typo and a wrong answer, the student is forced to go through correctional exercises which he may not need and without learning the basis for his errors" (p. 13).

ESL students' inability to control the computer is another problem. One aspect of this control issue is that of student input. "For the ESL student, too little input means the loss of an opportunity to practice production; too much required input dampens enthusiasm for creativity or promotes an 'only—one——answer is correct' mentality that is too confining" (Dalgish, 1984, p. 15). Another concern is that of student self-confidence. ESL students may acquire feelings of frustration and inadequacy whenever the computer registers their errors without making any distinction between a conceptual error or a technical error and without indicating to them why their responses were not acceptable. Furthermore, the manner in which the computer conveys to the students the fact that their answers are incorrect contributes to their sense of powerlessness. "Inappropriate responses run the full gamut from annoyingly user friendly messages like 'way to go' and tonal beeps from 'victorious'...through such bland and essentially useless answers like 'This is not the correct answer. Try it again' " (p. 16).

An additional shortcoming of Computer Assisted Instruction is that most programs do not provide for adequate teacher input. Since much of the available ESL software is designed so that no one can copy it, ESL teachers have a difficult time trying to

modify the software to meet the needs of their specific student population. If a teacher wants complete control of the content and design of computer ESL materials, then the teacher will have to write his or her own program. Also, some ESL teachers find that program documentation, a reference guide which accompanies the software, is inefficient. "Often, the documentation is disorganized, badly sequenced, poorly indexed, unnecessarily colloquial, but most importantly, lacks explanations of what we need to know; for instance, why the system is down...Moreover, HELP menus are hard to access and are often incomprehensible even when found. Most teachers, unless they have extensive computer training, will feel intimidated when they can not fix what is wrong by reading the documentation. Most ESL students, in turn, will be discouraged" (Dalgish, 1984, p. 19).

Despite its shortcomings, Computer Assisted Instruction is most likely to increase its involvement in the field of education, especially in the area of ESL. As software companies become familiar with the demands and goals of ESL, then they will improve the quality and lower the costs of their products. Videodisc technology will play a significant part in the preparation of ESL computer lessons, especially those communicative in nature, transforming locked stepped, sterile lessons into dynamic modes of instruction focusing on functional English.

This videodisc technology represents an integrated approach—a videotape player or videodisc player controlled by means of an interface with the computer. Material recorded on videotape or videodisc can also be integrated with printed lessons in the

computer. "The advantage of this mode of presentation is that a number of grammative/semantic concepts that trouble ESL students could be graphically illustrated on the computer [such as] tense, mass/count distinctions. and the syntax and semantics of difficult verbs like concern or involve and say versus tell. This notional imagery concept is a step beyond more traditional Computer Assisted Instruction ESL Methods where words...move around the screen as a result of various linguistic grammatical transformation" (Dalgish, 1984, p. 23).

Winston (1977) foresaw the demand for future research in the area of artificial intelligence. This research would develop methods of programming the computers to understand natural language in response to ESL teachers who want the computer to recognize meaning of student input from a variety of grammatically acceptable or deviant forms of student input and who want the computer to respond, thereby producing a student-computer conversation. For example, Esling (1984) and Loritz(1984), who have done research in this area also, have created ESL software lessons which allow a student to press a key on the computer and hear a short phrase.

> As the utterance is heard, its stress and intonation contours are plotted graphically on the bottom half of the screen. The student then repeats the utterance, and in seconds, the stress and intonation contours of what he has said are plotted on the top half of the screen, so that the student can compare his pattern to the model's. [A drawback of this lesson is that] even though the computer was able to do an analysis of sorts on the student's utterance, the depth of the analysis was sufficient only to display the intonation contour on the screen. It did not judge it as to its degree of correctness nor did it understand what the student said" (Jamieson, 1984, p. 11).

When quality sound is made more available, there will be more individuals working toward finding creative ways of using it in ESL.

Computer Assisted Instruction has potential in the area of ESL. Its material should duplicate effective teaching, providing a process whereby ESL teachers can respond to and adapt computer software in order to meet the needs of their students. Moreover, computer software programs should provide for the teacher hard copies of each student seesion (Dalgish, 1984), enabling them therefore to observe the student's problem areas and computer competency. "The teacher has time to look for a pattern of errors and make the individualization of instruction a reality by focusing only on the areas in which the student needs help" (p. 23).

Furthermore, students should have opportunities to interact with the computer. They should be able to receive explanations from the computer which point out the reason for their errors and to progress through the assigned program based on their rate of comprehension and mastery. ESL students should be assigned software which is individualized; which focuses on their rhetorical and grammatical problems; and which addresses problems caused from their first language interference. In addition to being taught by the computer, ESL students should be encouraged to learn how to program the computer (Papert, 1980). In short, Computer Assisted Instruction should match the plan of the curriculum. "If instruction is in the class, it should not be repeated at length on the computer. In like manner, concepts should not be

explained in a totally different way from one medium to the other. The content of Computer Assisted Instruction, even if it is just drill and practice, must relate to classroom work, even if the two are alternative method of presenting that work. It is not, however, a good idea to mold computer lessons too closely to any one text" (Marty, 1981, p. 46).

In conclusion, the methodology used in the instruction of English as a Second Language is determined by curricular goals which, in turn, are influenced by the nature of the learner population to be served.

> First, the patterns of considerable classroom exposure to English, but low actual use, means we can assume a fair amount of formal language instruction that has not been adequately reinforced. Furthermore, we can not rely on informal contacts in the environment to supply such reinforcement nor aid in natural language acquisition. Too, the presence of a large co-national group in the community means that the target language is not the only means of communication available to students learning to function in the new culture, and as noted above, many have been successfully functioning for considerable periods of time with a non-standard code. Finally, the relatively long length of stay in the USA prior to university enrollment means a high degree of fossilzation since our students have long since passed the critical period of 'optimal cognitive/affective tension' necessary for significant and rapid growth(Brown, 1980, p. 72).

In Massachusetts as well as nationally, the number of differentially prepared students enrolling in colleges and universities has increased. Among those students are those whose first language is not English and whose English proficiency is poor. The Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education realizes that ESL curriculum has to address basic listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills which are

"essential to extracting and organizing information, to exercising and developing critical thinking, to expressing ideas clearly and coherently, and to functioning competently in an increasing technologically and socially complex society" (Duff, 1982, p. 31). However, the emphasis on the formal conventions of English, particularly those of written English, neglects the development of "expressive and receptive" (Fox, 1983, p. 7) skills of oral English and, in turn, does not speak to the complete language development needs of the ESL students.

By the end of this decade, the Board of Regents expects students to be prepared with pre-collegiate skills before they are accepted to baccalaureate degree granting institutions. To fulfill its statutory mandate to provide access to public higher education for all students, the Regents envision the community colleges as a bridge between the high schools and universities which would provide services to meet the special needs of differentially prepared students, a learner population that includes ESL students. They also endorse the community colleges offering basic skill programs which require one or more years to complete. They contend that community colleges should represent the Commonwealth as a resource for special counseling and advising to guarantee ESL students' success as well as be the Commonwealth flagship for transitional programs which provide for an effective integration into the general curriculum. In essence, the Regents propose that the objectives of all efforts should be to provide for the ESL students the opportunity to (1) raise their cognitive skills and learning techniques to a level that will enable them to pur-

sue a college education and (2) develop self-confidence and self-respect in their ability; positive attitudes regarding learning; self-discipline; and community responsibility (Duff, 1982, p. 30). They further contend that the delivery of services and programs should be planned to provide maximum outreach and accessibility to students and maximum efficiency in use of resources.

Given that the Regents support an ESL curriculum that addresses basic listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, the question then is which ESL methodology is appropriate at the community college level for a diverse ESL student population. An example of such diversity can be observed at Bunker Hill Community College which is located in Charlestown, Massachusetts. Bunker Hill provided services to foreign students from 42 different countries during the Fall 1985 Semester in the Day Division.

TABLE 1

Enrollment of Foreign Students at Bunker Hill Community College

Australia	1	Germany(West)	1	Nigeria	5
Argentina	1	Guatemala	1	Panama	1
Bermuda	4	Haiti	5	China*	10
Brazil	1	Hong Kong	15	Peru	1
Colombia	1	Iran	5	Portugal	1
Canada	1	Ireland	6	Senegal	3
Costa Rica	3	Jamaica	1	Sierra Leone	5
Cameron	2	Japan	7	Somalia	3
Equador	1	Jordan	4	Sri Lanka	3
Eqypt	1	Kenya	1	Syria	2
England	3	Korea	1	Taiwan	2
Ethiopia	5	Lebanon	1	Thailand	2
France	2	Liberia	1	Uganda	2
Greece	6	Malaysia	1	Venezuela	5
		Uncoded	4		

* People's Republic of China

This total of 131 students does not include the majority of the ESL students who are not classified as foreign students (Bunker Hill Community College Faculty and Staff Newsletter,

1985, p. 2). Furthermore, the ESL students, some of whom are older and returning students, are not homogeneous in regard to their proficiency in English language skills and their first language dominance, nor are they all placed solely in the ESL program. Some take courses from the mainstream curriculum and need transitional ESL support. "The traditional ESL curriculum assumes considerable informal language acquisition, extensive reinforcement from natural language opportunities in the environment, and intense and rapid growth among students whose only possible mode of communication in the new country and culture is the target language. Clearly, these assumptions no longer fit a major portion of our ESL student body. "Accumulated evidence... points to minimal and compartmentalized utilization of the target language, few opportunities for environmental reinforcement of classroom learned skills, and success with minimal proficiency impeding mastery of the standard language" (Fox, 1983, p. 7).

I believe that, given the disparity in ESL student skill levels in English, their varied academic aspirations, and their diverse academic preparation and proficiency in their first language, individualized, self-paced instruction based in an environment rich in opportunities to interact with native speakers of English is a way for community colleges to make services available to a large number of differentially prepared ESL students. "The key to effective teaching is building on what students have already learned" (Jaggar, 1985, p. 5). By means of diagnostically testing their students, ESL teachers can identify the proficiency levels of their students, determining their students competence and skill levels. Individualized self-paced

instruction enables ESL teachers to prescribe learning activities appropriate to address the needs of each of their students and their skill levels. It also allows the students to progress at their own pace, and this option is essential for scheduled class sections populated with ESL students with diverse first language backgrounds, second language proficiencies, cultural heritages, and ages.

The success of individualized self-paced instruction is based on the ESL instructor's thorough organization of classroom activities: selecting applicable texts; designing course materials and tests; sequencing lesson units; scheduling tests; administering diagnostic pre-tests and post-tests; processing students' assignments and tests; monitoring students' progress; and training and supervising teacher's aides and English first language peer student tutors. It is crucial that the instructor clearly explains the concept of individualized self-paced instruction and the manner in which the teacher will implement this form of instruction to his or her ESL students and assistants. Each lesson's objectives are to be formulated in cognitive terms which can be applied and measured objectively in regard to all ESL students enrolled in each ESL class section. Furthermore, the ESL instructor develops the program of instruction not only on a series of learning experiences, namely lessons or modules, which would lead the student to a level of proficiency but also the order in which these experiences should occur.

When I say experience, I mean that the student has to participate in the learning process. To facilitate the student's

participation, the self-paced, individualized program must have a methodical and logical line of development. It must have continuity and cohesion, with all the parts fitting together in order to form a homogeneous whole. The individualized, self-paced program should lead the ESL student step by step through a logical development of the material of the sequenced modules of lesson material to mastery. Every step the student takes throughout the program should be towrd a definite learning goal stated in cognitive terms. Each step of learning is built upon previous steps or units, the completion of each which, in turn, moves the student closer toward mastery of the particular module. The goal for the student should be constantly in sight, and a definite direction should be obvious to him. I recommend that the material—a textbook, tape-slide presentation, or computer software—should give the student a sense that the program of instruction to which he or she is assigned by his teacher is moving him or her expeditiously to the student's goal—completion of a particular series of modules of activities which lead to mastery of a definite learning objective. The program, in turn, is made up of a series of learning objectives for the particular language skill addressed in the class's course curriculum.

Aural and oral proficiencies can also be addressed in an environment of individualized, self-paced instruction. One should note that there are particular aspects of oral proficiency.

> (1) Pronunciation——discrimination between sounds and words, a basic recognition skill. (2) Listening Comprehension——topical conversations and aural multiple choice questions and responses with nothing in

> print: pure ear training (3) Multiple levels of conversation courses and (4) Real Communication - more spontaneous conversations than in the regular sequence courses which have objectives in several skills (Harper, 1985, p. 4).

With proper diagnosis, ESL students can be assigned to groups within the classroom and ESL program which are compatible with their level of listening and speaking abilities in English. Interactive learning opportunities can take place between ESL students and native speakers of English. Peer tutors whose first language is English can be trained to lead mini-groups in conversational activities as well as in individual dialogues.

It is essential that ESL students have opportunities for verbal interaction with native speakers of English on a consistent basis in order for them to develop confidence in their ability to communicate with their native English speaking classmates. I believe that once ESL students master English sufficiently in order to survive in the English speaking world of school and work, they then can have control of their English speaking environment and be treated more responsively by their English speaking classmates and coworkers. It should not be forgotten that

> the ability to construct an oral text with another person is an essential part of the adult linguistic system which entails the ability to attend to words out of immediate context, to use appropriate grammatical forms, and to participate in dialogue. The adult system incorporates in more abstract form the two categories of function, i.e. communication and learning, of the earlier grammar and also includes a third, textual function. The communicative or interpersonal function incorporates all of those uses of language for doing and relating to others. This global function is interperson oriented and represents those functions in which a speaker uses particular communication rules to express personal values and attitudes, to seek to influence actions

> and attitudes of others, and in various ways, reveals self.
>
> The learning function of the adult, on the other hand, incorporates language uses for thinking, organizing, and expressing experience——experience of both the real world and the inner world of one's own consciousness. The textual function...refers to the language resources one has for creating oral or written texts to represent meanings intended by the speaker or writer. It represents the ability to use words, sentences, and other language options to construct texts which are coherent within themselves and within the context of the situation (King, 1985, p. 23).

I can not emphasize enough the need for opportunities to be provided for ESL students to practice their English orally and to develop their listening skills, thereby helping them gain confidence in communicating in English. The key for their success is the ESL teacher and his or her training of native speaking peer tutors. Peer tutors should meet on a weekly basis with the ESL instructor in order to discuss their reactions to each class's session; evaluate their performance; describe students' difficulties; and make recommendations to the instructor. The teacher should review the objectives of each session and instruct the tutors how to execute their roles as language facilitators. She or he would also give the tutors input concerning the teacher's observation of their performance as well as information about the languages and cultural heritages of the ESL students involved in the conversation groups. The pool of peer tutrors can consist of community college students interested in careers in education and human services; education major interns; and graduate students. Teacher aides, recruited from members of the community from which ESL students come and supervised by the ESL teacher, can also serve as classroom

facilitators and assist the ESL students in making the transition into the mainstream culture of the college.

The value of individualized self-paced instruction in ESL lies in its ability to provide flexible scheduling for the ESL students; allows the students to progress as rapidly as they wish; and enables the students to spend as much time on particular topics of their choosing. However, having the support of the community college administrators and the Board of Regents is not sufficient for the success of an ESL program. The instructors themselves play an important role in the implementation of an ESL program. "Not until we have taken a critical look at teachers' attitudes, both individual and professional, will we be ready to determine what obstacles still lie in the way of creating kinds of learning environments that will be the most helpful to our students...Teachers themselves may be standing in the way of second language achievement" (Sarignon, 1983, p. 296).

Some teachers resist individualized, self-paced instructional formats since these formats contrast with their established traditional ways of teaching as well as with how they imagine themselves. Those teachers who envision their impact on their ESL students as one of a parent-child relationship can only negatively affect their ESL students. "With the parent-child relationship, we are urged to take students by the hand, to lead them along the path, to guide their every step of the way, or to treat them in all the other ways which prove reminiscent of how we handle helpless infants who can do nothing for themselves

but babble (Danahy, 1984, p. 7)...we would not fail to take into account the one crucial and unmistakable difference between individuals in the first language and second language acquisition processes: the age difference. The impact of a teacher imagining himself or herself as parent must inevitably differ in two situations. For viewed metaphorically and especially from the uncustomary level of the parent-child polarity, the solicitude for the learner, which the pedagogue as parent sees, may be perceived at the other end by the learner only as condescension or infantilization..." (Rivers, 1981, p. 52).

On the other hand, there are those ESL teachers who resist individualized, self-paced instruction because it resembles a factory production model of instruction. They consider their students either as the objects produced or as the laborers producing the measurable second language results. Carol Herron (1982) describes these students as "well-oiled stimulus-response robots" (p. 238). Their perception of individualized, self-paced instruction is tainted by their desire not to lose power in the classroom. "When power is unevenly distributed on the side of the teachers, they inevitably expect of both students and themselves much too much in terms of progress, discipline, technical mastery or a flawless execution...To see students struggle and flounder against unrealistic expectations, missing the cues that we give them is, on the other hand, but one of the choices we have" (Danahy, 1984, p. 14).

The other choice for ESL teachers is to create an atmosphere in which students are relaxed enough to want to use their Eng-

lidh and communicate and work out an exercise for themselves without any intrusion from the instructor (Refugee Link Program, 1981, p. 45). Moreover, ESL students should have access to a learning environment in which their mistakes are not embarassing and their practice of English is not inhibited. An individualized, self-paced instructional format fosters a non-threatening learning environment and places the learner on par with the instructor instead of on a level of a subordinate or inferior status which is invariably meted out by more traditional teacher-oriented learning situations. It also leaves the ESL students free to learn at a pace compatible with their needs.

In summary, my position with regard to the teaching of English as a Second Language to differentially prepared students enrolled in institutions of higher education is that the most effective means for teaching ESL lies in the establishment of an acquisition rich environment in which students come in contact with input from a wide range of authentic English language samples both printed and spoken which vary in levels of difficulty. It is crucial that the acquisition of English is made possible by an approach which is not viewed as intimidating nor oppressive by the students. I believe that the Immersion Approach promotes an environment in which the emphasis is on language as a means of communicating ideas. It does not stress rote memorization of words and sentence structures. What it does do, however, is to provide opportunities for learning a second language as naturally as the ESL student did his or her first language, thereby lessening the anxiety which the ESL student feels when he or she finds himself or herself in an academic environment

which is culturally and linguistically alien from his or her own experiences.

Furthermore, I believe that the order of instruction should parallel that of learning one's first language, namely listening, speaking, reading, and then writing. "Research confirms that [students] are active agents in their own learning. Knowledge is not something that exists outside; it is constructed within by the learner. All learning, particularly the learning of language, involves activity and discovery. [Students] will acquire new knowledge only when they can relate it to existing ideas or language that is when it 'makes sense' in terms of what they already know" (Jaggar, 1985, p. 2). To require students to learn a second language solely in terms of its syntax without any emphasis on its phonology does not represent the natural process of language learning. Therefore, when students are expected to learn a second language in such an unnatural and unfamiliar manner, the possibility of their success is doubtful.

Moreover, given the disparity in ESL student skill proficiency in English, I believe that individualized, self-paced instruction is a mode of instructional delivery which can address a large number of differentially prepared ESL students. It provides flexible scheduling for ESL students; a mode of instruction that allows the students to progress at their own rate; and opportunities for students to spend as much time on any segment of the lesson they need. Individualized, self-paced instruction also allows the students to participate in the learning process which enables them to be in control. With this control will come a sense of confidence based on

the students' command of English. In turn, this command of English will strengthen the students' chances for academic success and social survival in the mainstream English dominant society of which they are apart.

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